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AN ANSWER

To several NEW

Laws and Orders

Made by the

Rulers of Boston

IN

New-England

The Tenth Day of the Eighth Moneth, 1677.

By G. F.

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An Answer to several New Laws and Orders made by the Rulers of Boston, &c.

WE have seen several Laws and Orders, made at the second Sessions of the General Court at *Boston*, and published the tenth of the eighth moneth, 1677. by their Order, by *Edward Rowson* Secretary; (viz.)

First, *Wherein we take notice of some things as followeth*:

And *first* you say, *Many secret Attempts has been by evil-minded Persons to Fire the Town of* Boston, *tending to the Destruction, &c. This Court doth Account it their Duty, to use all Lawful Means to Discover such Persons, and prevent the like for time to come.*

Answ. But what persons have ye discovered by your Act or Order? for hath it not been the Hand of the Almighty God, that hath pleaded with you, with Fire and Sword, and other Judgments, and yet you will neither hear nor see? Have you forgotten your Hot Irons, by which you stigmatized and branded? Do you not think God will pay your Debts, and with full Interest in the end? And do you think that your Acts and Laws will keep off the Lord from pleading with you by Fire, and his Judgments? And do you think, that all your People taking the *Oath of Fidelity* to you and your Country, will stop the Judgments of God, or bring more upon you, who make the Command of Christ void, and of none effect your selves, and make Laws to compel others to do the same, as in *Mat.* 5. *James* 5. which saith, *Swear not at all*, with a Penalty, and that they do go into Evil and Condemnation that do Swear; a sad Penalty,

even Condemnation? Or will you and your Priests say, That there must be a Meaning to these words of Christ and the Apostle, and though they commanded not to Swear, yet they did not mean as they spoke, there must be a Meaning given to them by you & your Priests; then would not you think it strange that all your people, that you would have to take the *Oath of Fidelity* to the Country and you, that they should observe none of your Laws and Orders, but say, *You do not mean as you speak, but there must be a Meaning given to them*? Then would not this throw all your Laws, Acts & Orders away, and render you to be a double-tongu'd People, to speak one thing, and mean another? if you count this wrong doing or saying, do not you serve Christ and his Apostle, so, who saith, *Swear not at all.*

For is not your Law and Order of your Court, *That the Law to require all persons, as well Inhabitants as Strangers, that hath not taken the Oath, to take the Oath of Fidelity to the Country, be revived and put in practice through this Jurisdiction, &c. And that if any Officers, as Select Men, Constables or Tything-men, that is intrusted with the Execution of this Order, do neglect his or their Duty therein, that they be fined not exceeding* 5 l. *for one Offence, &c.*

Answ. Would the Reader think, that these are the *New-England* refined Professors, which fled out of *Old England*, to *New-England*, upon the account of Religion, that are now forcing Inhabitants, and Strangers, and their Officers thus to transgress and make null the express Command of Christ Jesus with such Penalties? For Christ saith, *But I say unto you, Swear not at all, but let your Communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is* [added] *more than these, it cometh of Evil*: and is not this a Gospel Command of Christ? see *Mat.* 5. 9, 34, 37. And *Above all things, my Brethren, Swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other Oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest you fall into Condemnation*: And is not here a Penalty with a Witness for breaking the Gospel Command of Christ in the New Covenant, which is not according to the Old; for by the Law of God in the Old Covenant they were to swear truly, before the Gospel times, that Christ came in the flesh; and all vain, and frivolous, and false Swearing was forbidden;

but

but Christ and the Apostle forbid all Swearing. But what is *New-England*'s Penalty upon Strangers and Inhabitants, that do not swear, & take the *Oath of Fidelity*, &c? and what is the Penalty upon the Officers, as Constables, Tything-men, &c. that do not take this Oath? and *if they neglect their Duty to you*, and obey Christ, *they shall be fined*, you say, *not exceeding* 5 *l.* So by your Law and Order, every Officer shall be fined 5 l. for keeping the Gospel Command of Christ; and all Strangers and Inhabitants, which keep the Gospel Command of Christ, and dare not swear, and break it, but refuse to swear, they, you say, shall be proceeded against as your Laws & Commands direct, contrary to Christ.

And further, you say, Your Court doth declare, *That all such Refusers to take the said Oath, shall not have the benefit of our Laws to implead, sue or recover any Debts in any Court or Courts within this Jurisdiction, or have Protection from this Government, while they continue in such obstinate Refusal (to wit) to Swear, &c.*

Answ. So the Swearer, which breaks the Gospel Command of Christ, must have the benefit of your Law, and Protection (and not be counted obstinate) yea, and such as goes into Evil & Condemnation: And they that keep the Gospel Command of Christ and the Apostle, shall have no Benefit nor Protection among you, no not in any of your Courts, to sue for his just Debts. And this Law of yours must be printed and published by your Order; is not this the Power of the Spirit of the Beast, that acts you, and not from the Spirit of Christ Jesus, which compels all to bow, and to receive his Mark, and to disobey the Gospel Command of Christ Jesus; and that such as cannot bow, and disobey the Command of Christ their Lord and Saviour, they shall have no Protection among you by your Government, nor no benefit of your Laws, to get their just Debts, in any Courts w thin your Jurisdiction. Well, blessed be the Lord, that the Horn of this Beast reaches no further than his own Jurisdiction. Oh! how dare you name the Name of Christ in your Mouthes, when you thus trample his Command under your Feet, and fine your Officers 5 l. apiece for their neglecting to tender the Oath to the Inhabitants and Strangers to swear, and they that will not break the Command of Christ shall not have Right nor Justice, neither in your

your Courts, nor Protection in your Government? O unheard of Cruelty! did ever the Bishops or Magistrates in Old *England* serve you so, before you fled into *New-England*? And is not this the power of the Beast and Whore, to compel all to bow and worship? What Scripture have you for your Rule and Practice herein? let us see Chapter and Verse, or else for shame stop your Mouthes, and never tell of Scripture more to be your Rules; for where did ever the Apostles give forth any such Commands or Orders to the *Christians*, that *people should have no Benefit nor Protection except they would swear*, and break Christ's Command? Is not this enough to bring the Vengeance of God from Heaven upon your Heads.

And your *Additional Law concerning such as Prophane the Sabbath, &c.*

Answ. But what it is that does prophane it, you do not declare it in your Additional Law.

And you say, That *the Fines raised by the Penalty of this Law upon the Delinquents shall be brought to the County Treasurer, &c.*

Answ. Where was it ever ordered by the Law of God, in the old Covenant, that Fines should be laid on them that did prophane the Sabbath, and bring it to the Treasurer, and he to give the Tything-men and Constable part of it, &c? Were they not by the Law of God to be put outwardly to Death? And where did ever Christ and the Apostles lay a Fine upon any which did not keep the *Jews* Sabbath, that was given in the Old Covenant as a Sign? Were not Christ and his Disciples accused for Sabbath-breakers, of that Sign, he, who was the Substance, and the Eternal Rest? And if the *Jews*, for not keeping the Sabbath in the Old Covenant, dyed an Outward Death; do not they dye an Eternal Death, that do not keep the Day of Christ, and that Eternal Sabbath in the New Covenant?

And did the *Christians* in the New Covenant keep the First Day of the Week, which Christ rose on, and met of it? and is the First day of the Week the *Jews* Seventh Day Sabbath, spoken of in the Old Covenant? And did the Apostles call the First Day of the Week, which they met of, a Sabboth? and if so, let's see Chapter and Verse where it is so called in the New Testament by

by the Apoſtles. Now do not you imagine in your Evil Hearts, that we would have the Firſt Day of the Week prophaned, which Chriſt roſe of; we ſay, nay, we would not have that day prophaned, nor ſo much as any other Day of the Week prophaned, but that God may alwayes be glorified.

But you that profeſs your ſelves *Chriſtians*, and yet walk like neither *Jews* nor *Chriſtians*, Law nor Goſpel, and perſecute others that would not do the ſame; what do you think will become of you, and what will be your End, for all your Perſecutions and Baniſhing, and Bloodſheddings, and Whippings, and Hangings, and Branding the Forehead with Hot Irons, and Cutting off Ears, and the Spoiling the Goods of the Servants of the Moſt High and Living God? Do not you think that God Almighty will reckon with you, as he did with *Pharaoh*, *Herod*, *Jezabel*, and the *Jews* and *Judas* for murdering and betraying Chriſt? Will not he at laſt pay you your Debt, as he did theſe, and give you your full Intereſt? For, with what meaſure you meaſure, will he meaſure to you again, good meaſure, ſhaken together, and running over; and therefore go learn this Leſſon, *Do unto others as you would have them to do to you.*

The 18th of the
8th Moneth,
1678.

G. F.

THE END.